Coordination practice

E-GOVERNMENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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The presented study summarises coordination practices in the area of e-government. In its first part, it gives a brief outline of the Czech general political-administrative structure and e-government policy. It points out the large number of small municipalities and issues of reforms of the central level. The second part further introduces coordination practices during the recent e-government development. It points out issues of national e-government coordination – particularly the rather strict top-down approach which is not followed by sufficient evaluation, unstable political leadership, a high level of secrecy and almost no transparency. The criticised aspects of e-government coordination are also linked to examples of concrete e-government projects.

Preface

This coordination practice is a result of research within COCOPS Work Package 5: The Governance of Social Cohesion: Innovative Coordination Practices in Public Management.

The COCOPS project (Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future) seeks to comparatively and quantitatively assess the impact of New Public Management style reforms in European countries, drawing on a team of European public administration scholars from 11 universities in 10 countries.

The specific objectives of Work Package 5 are:

- To search and identify emerging coordination practices and related steering instruments in public management in European public sectors.

- To compile a case study catalogue of such coordination practices with direct utility to public managers and the research community.

- To analyse the functioning of such coordination practices and to assess their value in countering public sector fragmentation and delivering public value.

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1. THE COORDINATION LANDSCAPE	
Main country characteristics: The Czech Republic	
General political-administrative structure	The Czech Republic is a unitary state with a parliamentary system and decentralised and de-concentrated government. As a result of the post-communist administrative reform which had been focusing particularly on decentralisation in the 1990s, there are three basic levels of public administration – central, regional and municipal. In some administrative areas (i.e. in the case of some "de-concentrates" – specialised state administration areas), also districts – as administrative territories – still exist. Fourteen regions (since 2000, including the capital of Prague) and more than 6200 municipalities (of which the majority has less than 500 inhabitants) represent self-government units. The post-communist legislation established what is called the joined model of territorial public administration – the same bodies of municipalities and regions (particularly their offices as the executive bodies) may exercise self-governmental as well as state-administration tasks. This put a stress on capacities of central government to coordinate and evaluate the practices. This solution also brought still discussed questions about:
	- optimal funding of state administration exercised by bodies of municipalities and regions;
	- political accountability of municipal/regional councils for activities principally related to the State;
	- capacities of civil servants of municipalities to provide state-administration services in the uniform and professional level across the state territory.
	The design of regions, which started their activities mainly since 2001, did not take into account criteria of the European regional policy (like characteristics of "NUTS2"). Most regions have less than 600,000 inhabitants and – therefore – were not eligible to receive funding from the European regional policy. This issue was partly solved in 2000 when "regions of cohesions" as specific administrative hybrids were established. Their political and executive bodies have to guarantee and manage the cooperation of mostly two or more regions as strictly specified in legislation. This "cooperation" is not based on an agreement between individual regions which form a region of cohesion.
	In the case of the central level, 14 ministries and 11 other central authorities exist as central-administration authorities established by the act on responsibilities of central authorities. Other central authorities were established by individual acts (e.g. the Office for Government Representation in Property Affairs, or the Office for Personal Data Protection). Central administration has not been paid systematic and comprehensive attention for most of the time of the post-communist

administrative reform. Particularly partial changes of its structures (e.g. the creation or abolishment of ministries and other central authorities) rather than improvements in processes were realised, although the central level was criticised in annual reports of inter- and supra-national institutions (like the European Commission, the Council of Europe) as well as by domestic studies as being incompetent and with a strong degree of sectorisation and lack of real horizontal coordination. A more systematic approach to reforming of central administration could be visible especially in the reform programme from 2004 which repeated most of the aims from the previous period, but attempted to implement project-management ideas. This programme specified 5 main directions of reform (rationalisation of central state-administration processes, improvement of management in central state administration, improvement of central state administration quality, implementation and improvement of state service in central administrative authorities, rationalisation of central state administration funding) and their projects. Most of them are overlapping with current reform initiatives which are based especially on the "Strategy of smart administration" adopted in 2007 (there is no later general public-administration reform strategy in the Czech Republic).

One of the unsolved issues of the Czech administrative system is represented by the legal status of civil servants. There is still only a partial solution in place. In 2002 the legal status of civil servants has been specified in two acts: The Act on Civil Servants of Territorial Self-Governments, which has already come into force, and the Act on State Service, which specifies in much more depth (if compared to the first act) the legal status of the majority of executive employees of central authorities and their de-concentrates, but has not come into force yet. The legal force of this act has been postponed almost every two years since 2003, now it is expected in 2015. The government has also been reconsidering approvals of legislation (i.e. act on public service) that would unify the legal status of the majority of civil servants under one act. The final solution is still not clear (as of January 2013!).

Typical coordination practices that can be observed in the Czech administrative system are based on relatively strict top-down practices. Regulation is approved on the central level and it is expected to be implemented through the hierarchical mechanism of control and command in the subsystem of state administration. Coordination is also influenced by the mentioned joined model of territorial public administration. Regions shall represent intermediary level between state and municipalities and according to the legislation they should help municipalities in the field of self-government as well as state administration. In some areas (like e-government or provision of social services), legislation requires regions to evaluate existing practices, which shall serve as an output to national evaluation (that is often missing). Since the number of municipalities is large, they cooperate with each other, particularly in a form of voluntary associations (which, if established, are considered legal entities with their

	own budgetary processes). Such cooperation is not economically motivated by the central level (e.g. in the form of subsidies as expected in some projects which have not been realised yet).
Coordination discourse	Labels like NPM or post-NPM have not been discussed explicitly during the Czech post-communist public-administration reform in the reform programmes as well as in academic publications. Themes like joined-up government and whole-of-government are discussed particularly with regards to e-government development. They are also pointed out when various actors (other central authorities, representatives of self-governments and their associations, media etc.) criticise the central strict top-down approach during the public-policy cycle.

In practice, focus on vertical coordination has been more visible during the Czech post-communist reform, although the topic was given almost the same attention as a horizontal coordination in reform rhetoric as well as critique. In vertical coordination practices particularly the aim to unify to a larger extent practices of municipalities (due to their high number) from self-governmental as well as state administration responsibilities and establish and further develop effective mechanism of supervision and control can be pointed out (coordination "regulation" was growing incrementally in some areas also as a consequence of existing foreign practices – this is, for example, the case of budgetary rules, financial control, public tendering, and e-government).

New mechanisms were established also for the area of horizontal coordination – either as a consequence of reform programmes and/or new duties stipulated in new legislation. In comparison to the past, current administrative reform is different particularly in the mechanism of its coordination adjustments. In 2004 the Government Office became a main coordinator and designated evaluator of public-administration reform, because its function is not so bound with structures of individual ministries. In Autumn 2006, this responsibility was transferred (back) to the Ministry of Interior which is now the main coordinator of public administration and its reform in general. This ministry is also responsible for e-government development (after the formal abolishment of the Ministry of Informatics in Autumn 2007). These transfers were supposed to unify the public-administration coordination tasks.

As stated above, reform aims have almost remained the same (if we compare them with aims stressed in former reform strategies), and the Ministry of Interior also has to face challenges restraining the improvements similar to those explicitly emphasised by the Government Office in 2005, and more or less repeated in a recent document "Analysis of current State of Public Administration" (Ministry of Interior 2012) – particularly insufficient factual horizontal coordination and cooperation and low level of standardisation of processes). |
| Policy area | E-Government represents a relatively fashionable field of Czech public-administration reform. The temporary government of 2009 and the current |

government (as appointed in 2010) have not approved any e-government policy, neither the broader information policy, nor the more specific e-government development framework. The goal of State policy in the area of electronic communications – *Digital Czechia* – is different. Therefore aims specified in the so-called "*Smart Administration strategy*" (Efficient Public Administration and Friendly Public Services – Strategy on Realization of Smart Administration in the Period 2007-2015, approved in 2007) and supplementary documents (*Strategy for development of services for information society, Strategy of e-government implementation in a territory*, both approved in 2008) are still relevant. Their importance also grows thanks to their funding from the EU structural funds. Representatives of both the last governments and their civil servants have repeated that, due to the financial development, they will try to revise the e-government priorities.

The *Smart Administration strategy* is clearly predominantly technology-oriented. It presupposes extensive ICT use in the Czech public sector. Particularly the following similarities to former plans were echoing within the aims enumerated in the strategy:

a) to establish functional basic registers (i.e. Register of Inhabitants, Register of Legal Entities, Register of Territorial Identification, Addresses and Real Estates, and newly – in comparison to previous policies – also Register of Rights and Duties);

b) to improve the practice of interoperable joined-up government by other projects than basic registers (e.g. by the network of contact points like Czech POINTS) and together with standardised management of public-administration information systems (which shall include also continual monitoring of quality and security);

c) to guarantee the possibility to use e-government channels in service-delivery mechanisms (also in legal terms);

d) to promote channels of electronic communication with and inside public administration (e.g. through the project of data boxes);

e) to promote e-government education of civil servants.

Some of the aims of e-government policies have been supported by following *e-government legislation* – e.g. the Act on Free Access to Information, the Act on Information Systems of Public Administration, which currently prescribes not only the new accessibility requirements, but also general duties of "long-term management" of information systems within which also the certification of information systems and related information strategies is required, the new Administrative Procedure Act, and – from the more recent ones – the Act on Electronic Transactions and Authorised Conversion of Documents (the so called "e-Government Act" from 2008), or the Act on Basic Registers (from 2009).

## 2. COORDINATION PRACTICE: eGovernment in the Czech Republic

2.1. Substance

Country	Czech Republic
Area	Central government
Main characteristics of the practice	The Czech e-government policy and legislation have been aiming at improving the interoperability of public administration information systems. The practice of Czech e-government and its coordination always reflects (or should reflect) characteristics of state administration and self-government and their organisation on the joined principle in a territory. Distinctive features of state administration as a subsystem of Czech public administration are particularly the centralisation, hierarchy and top-down implementation of projects which intend to modernise it. In the territorial state administration, the development of e-government is influenced/conditioned by national projects which are realised by individual branches of state administration (mostly separately by individual ministries) or in more resorts together with coordination of the Ministry of Interior. The national projects usually bring about an adaptation of information systems of municipalities and regions, whose functionalities also cover the area of self-government.
Background and initiation of the practice	A greater emphasis on e-government coordination and evaluation was initiated particularly because in the 1990s various mutually interoperable information systems of public administration were established on the central as well as on the territorial level, which brought future problems of incompatibility, efficiency and coordinated development. Partly this was a consequence of rapid public administration reform and its focus and refocusing during its short history. Similarly to some other Central and Eastern European countries (CEEcs), e-government was not always an explicit part of their initial reform phases, during which particularly the initial democratisation and the establishment of a basis of the public administration structure (including the creation of self-governments), together with initial economic transformation, were emphasised. Rather, the use of ICTs in the public sector and in public administration was emphasised and was paid more systematic attention in policy later, in the phase of modernisation that can be linked mainly to the period starting in the late 1990s and especially in the first years of the new millennium. E-government in the EU candidate countries also was not explicitly emphasised by the European level in the early phase of the accession process and was shaped later, mainly with the emergence of the eEurope and following European e-government policies. In the Czech e-government literature, two phases of e-government developments are usually distinguished, taking into account the level of

	regulation and coordination of e-government development. The first phase is represented by the period from 1989 to 1999/2000 and the second by the following years. The year 1999 is considered crucial thanks to the approval of the first e-government strategy, the year 2000 for the approval of the Act on Public Administration Information Systems – the first legislation that replaced (to a large but not a definitive extent) fragmented and insufficient legislation and specified also sanctions that can be used by coordinating bodies (Office for State Information System and following Office for Public Information Systems). This act became the basic legal instrument of e-government coordination, and the following years have brought its amendments and other specific legislation.
Time frame	The requirements to manage and coordinate e-government development centrally have been echoing since the first e-government strategy was approved in 1999. Among its aims the necessity to develop compatible and interconnected information systems of public administration was also enumerated, and it was anticipated that it would use common communication infrastructure as well as standardised e-signature (authentication) solutions. In organisational terms, the practice has been more stabilised after the Ministry of Interior was given the general e-government management responsibilities in 2007. The process of e-government-coordinated development is a continual, not a one-off process, further emphasised by the fact that basic registers have been launched only very recently (in Summer 2012) and their practice is not as depicted by the Ministry of Interior according to the representatives of territorial governments and their executives. Also the necessity to evaluate existing policies more systematically and on a continual and more user-centred basis was repeated (although in a more or less rephrased way) in mid-2007 in the Smart administration strategy, and its rhetoric is being incorporated into real practices only very slowly (and currently also thanks to the adopted European e-government measurement framework rather than as a consequence of improved national evaluation practices). The evaluation practice has been improved only partly and only in the case of methodology used by the Czech Statistical Office.

2.2.	Structure and actors

Basic features	The current Czech e-government policy and legislation presupposes the following structure of actors that shall be involved in e-government coordinated development and management:
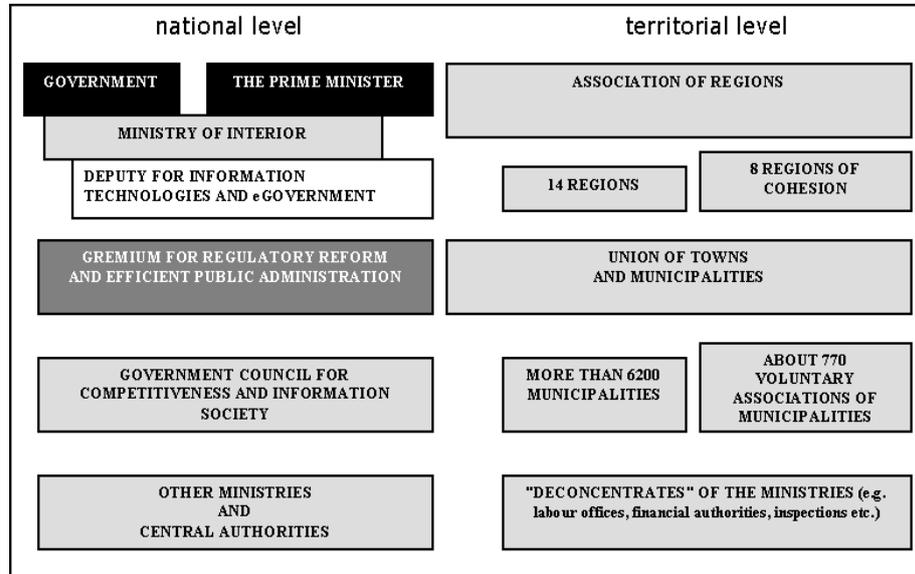
The figure is further specified below in the section "Main actors". It emphasises the central role of the political level (the Government, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior). The Ministry of Interior as a representative of the central bureaucratic level represents "a key bearer" of the Czech strategy reform and its management. It shall cooperate with other external stakeholders from the group of central authorities (of which particularly the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Social Affairs were the pioneers of Czech central e-government projects) and territorial self-governments and their associations. The ministry is also responsible for the evaluation of e-government in the Czech Republic. This duty is incorporated in the general duty of the ministry to search for, process, save and create new information that forms a knowledge base for quality development and improvement of information systems of public administration.

Since Autumn 2009, various reorganisations of the *Ministry of Interior* had been realised which have been followed by personnel changes in top positions. The former "Deputy of the Minister for Public Administration, Informatics, Legislation and Archiving" and his ca. 900 employees were split up into responsibilities and personnel of two deputies – Deputy of the Minister for Public Administration, Legislation and Archiving, and Deputy of the Minister for Informatics. This split was also motivated by the tendency of the former sub-system to concentrate mostly on e-government rather than on other issues in public administration, including legislative proposals

and archiving. The first section should have created assignments, and the executives of the deputy for informatics should have offered ways how to implement them (as pointed out by the new Deputy for Public Administration, Legislation and Archiving in the interview in November 2009). Currently there is only one deputy responsible for e-government, within his office the organisation has not been stabilised, and the former section for informatics and e-government was split into two sections. Some have pointed out that the European Commission has frequently criticised changes in the top bureaucratic positions of Czech ministries and hope that the European funding will not be restricted. Also the political leadership of the ministry was not stable and has been stabilised to a certain degree after the appointment of the new minister in April 2011.

The practice of the national e-government coordinator – the Ministry of Interior – is characterised by a high level of secrecy and almost no transparency – almost no publicly available information on e-government evaluation (including the evaluation of coordination) has been published by the Ministry (even in cooperation with other key "evaluation" stakeholders from the central administration), and one can deduce features of e-government public management from practices as criticised by the media or supervising institutions.

Although the Smart Administration strategy presupposes that the Group for Smart Administration Coordination should produce reports on a semi-yearly and annual basis, no such reports have been made available to the public so far. Only minutes from the Gremium's meetings are available on its website. The Group for Smart Administration Coordination has published only the list of projects proposed for funding from the European structural funds within the Smart administration strategy on its web pages so far, the list does not comment on the prioritisation of individual projects or their cost-benefit characteristics.

Up to the present time, the Czech Statistical Office (CSO) has remained the only central authority which has published information on inter-sectoral e-government practices and several aspects of e-service provision by public administration. Its research outputs still cannot serve the national e-government coordinator – the Ministry of Interior – to make the e-government development more evidence-based, however. Several aspects of ICT use by the public and public administration have been surveyed by CSO more systematically, especially since 2004. The available data are not always up-to-date, and the methodology still does not sufficiently cover municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants. Although its methodology was supposed to incorporate economic and social outcomes of ICT use, it still mostly follows Eurostat's e-readiness framework. The methodology of the CSO is not always consistent since it does not incorporate sufficiently the surveying of key e-government national projects (portal of public administration, the Czech POINT projects, data boxes and basic registers).

Main tools	The main types of e-government coordination practices are influenced by the prevalent top-down approach to the central e-government policy (which influences the practices of e-government projects of territorial self-governments).
	In general, the process of e-government policy design, implementation and coordination has more or less the following elements:
	a) national policy, which is often elaborated by the Ministry of Interior without larger participation of other actors (like other ministries; this can also be seen in the fact that e-government policies have not taken into account data produced by the Czech Statistical Office);
	b) (sometimes) supplementary regulation offered for comments via the ministerial website (formerly also via the national Public administration portal which does not allow for comments on new legislation any more – since March 2012);
	c) communication of a) and b) to self-governments and other relevant public authorities:
	− directly (including the roundtables, meetings with representatives, national e-government or quality-management conferences etc.), or
	− via regions as intermediaries which sometimes only forward information they have received from the central level according to municipalities, or
	− via web pages of the Ministry or other responsible central institution-specific web pages designed for individual projects – like www.czechpoint.cz, www.datoveschranky.info, www.egoncentrum.cz, www.szrcr.cz) → announcement of calls for project proposals and related funding (usually published on web pages);
	d) request of information on achieved practices, e.g. related to (often mutually interlinked):
	− project realisation as, for example, anticipated by the Integrated Operational Programme based on which the e-government development is heavily funded,
	− survey methodology of the Czech Statistical Office etc.,
	− duties anticipated by the legislation (attestation, management of information systems and requests for information that serves as input into meta-information system like an information system about information systems etc., which are not followed by further elaboration in the form of more complex evaluation reports that can be used for following evidence-based development and coordination.

Main actors	The current national e-government coordination organisation has the following organisational structure as anticipated in the e-government legislation and policy:
	- The *Ministry of Interior* is responsible for general e-government coordination and evaluation.
	- The *Government Council for Information Society* was established in Spring 2007. It shall advise government in the area of conceptual development of information society in order to accomplish a higher level of interconnection and coordination of ministerial and national projects. It is presided over by the prime minister and consists of ministers and other members representing state administration and self-governments.
	- On the central level also the *Gremium for Regulatory Reform and Efficient Public Administration* was established as an inter-sectoral coordinating body of Smart administration strategy. The Gremium consists of central authorities, the Union of towns and municipalities of the Czech Republic, the Association of Regions of the Czech Republic and the Economic Chamber, and is presided over by the Minister of Interior. It shall comment on the legislative proposals, approve project proposals, comment on proposals of mid- and long-term conceptions, analyses and programmes. The Smart Administration strategy presupposed that the Group for Smart Administration Coordination would be appointed, which should coordinate the elaboration and evaluation of projects, elaborate the projects' schedule and inform the government about the reform progress semi-yearly and annually. Semi-yearly reports shall be submitted to the Gremium. Annual reports shall be submitted to governments.
	- The *Czech Statistical Office* (CSO) has remained the only central authority which has continually published information on inter-sectoral e-government practices. Although its methodology was supposed to incorporate economic and social outcomes of ICT use, it still mostly follows Eurostat's e-readiness framework.
	- Sometimes the general strategy does not enumerate (integrate) aims of e-government projects of strong central authorities like the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Social Affairs, which may raise difficulties of integrated e-government evaluation. In these cases, these strong ministries represent important coordinating institutions.
	For the purposes of coordinated development of e-government (and following aims of the Strategy of eGovernment Implementation in a Territory), "eGON centres" were established in regions and larger municipalities in order to facilitate ICT development according to local and regional needs. Working documents of the Ministry of Interior also highlighted needs to implement e-government strategic planning (e.g. they anticipate regions to adopt eGovernment strategy of a region) and coordination activities of regions in development of municipal e-

government. The regional and municipal eGON centres are also responsible for "technological centres", allowing the establishment, operation and maintenance of standardised infrastructure necessary for processing key data of basic registers and other applications (e.g. file service systems, CzechPOINT@home). According to the Ministry of Interior the project will link the technological centres to the project of Czech POINT for municipalities, which will facilitate a certain standardisation of their ICT use even in the case of small municipalities.

The approach anticipates stable leadership, active involvement of politicians and executives from the central as well as the territorial level that would be based on a network structure, but also incorporate hierarchical aspects (due to the standardisation aims and coordination responsibilities of the centre). Particularly representatives of territorial self-governments criticise the central strict top-down approach to design of various public policies, their implementation and (not sufficient) evaluation as well as problems of instable political leadership and politicisation of executive leadership of e-government development on the central level. Some have already criticised that the national e-government coordinator – the Ministry of Interior – has no clear vision on the future potential of already established communication channels like the national portal of public administration (although its new form has been launched very recently) as well as on future prospects of the currently launched projects. The criticised aspects of e-government coordination can be linked to the following examples of cases:

a) The recent reorganisation of social policy administration and its tasks, most of which were transferred from municipalities of enlarged responsibilities to newly reorganised labour offices (since the beginning of 2012). This change has not been communicated sufficiently by the responsible ministries (the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Social Affairs), and the Internet is full of critique from municipalities that pointed out the speed of the reform, insufficient preparation and unclear changes in personnel. The change was followed by a new ICT solution which did not work properly, and in January some people who were entitled to the social benefits did not receive them. Still in April 2012 the system was not functioning properly. It was unstable and lacked important functions according to employees of labour offices (who also called for Minister of Social Affairs' resignation). More businesses have to work on the solution, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs did not launch the public tender for it, and some media have criticised the extortionate price of the revision as well as insufficient information of the Ministry on who is doing the revisions etc. (which is also currently investigated by the Office for the Protection of Competition).

b) Basic registers: Similarly to all the previous e-government policies, the Smart Administration strategy anticipated the practice of basic registers – in its text it was expected that in 2010 basic registers would be

launched and functional, which would replace the many still existing heterogeneous and often duplicate records of various authorities. The act on public registers was published in 2009 and was supposed to come in force since July 2010. Amendments to this act from 2010 postponed its enforcement to July 2012. A technical solution for the registers was expected to enter its pre-operational phase on 1 July 2011. By the end of March 2012 the validity and completeness of data in registers and their completion was anticipated, and a month later other information systems shall have been linked to basic registers. The plan was specified in more depth by government regulation 161 from May 2011, which stipulated duties of administrators of departmental information systems, the Office for the Administration of Basic Registers and the Office for Personal Data Protection. Still in May 2011 some experts criticised the huge delay of basic registers' establishment, which was caused by problems of related public tenders. Particularly the tenders for the Register of Inhabitants and the Register of Rights and Duties were the most problematic. Information which has been published by institutions responsible for basic registers' implementation (particularly the Ministry of Interior and the Office for the Administration of Basic Registers) had tackled the project implementation only in a superficial and partial way. Although the study *Impacts of Basic Registers Launching on Territorial Self-Governments* was published and the Ministry of Interior presented a pilot version of basic registers during the ISSS 2012 conference in April 2012, it is still not always clear in what phase the project currently is (individual basic registers are), and some commentators are sceptical about the roadmap of effects as presented during the conference by the Ministry (e.g. Peterka criticises the marketing and PR of the project and even perceives the presentation during the conference as propaganda, one of the commentators of the article speaks of "theatre" performance, another commentator would welcome reasonable and truthful information from the Ministry etc.). Still in April 2012, representatives of the Czech Statistical Office, the institution responsible for launching the Register of Inhabitants, criticised that public authorities (that run the resort-information systems) have not sent necessary quality data, and the Office had to urge them to send their revised version. This made it almost impossible for the Office to launch the register in time. In December 2011, personal change on the position of the Director of the Office for the Administration of Basic Registers was realised, which further supports discussions about the instability of e-government management in the Czech Republic.

c) The project of eIDs represents another example of an unclear, insufficiently deliberated, communicated and coordinated approach to central e-government project implementation in the Czech Republic (besides the above-mentioned example introducing changes in social administration and current problems of the Transport Register). Its practice has also been influenced by the implementation of the Register

of Inhabitants. During the 2009 national e-government conference ("ISSS") representatives of the Ministry of Interior announced that the issuing of eIDs would start in July 2010. Still in July 2011 the Ministry of Interior suggested that the issuing will be postponed to 2014 due to the insufficient funding. In October 2011, the proposal of ministerial ordinance that contained also the issuing of eIDs was sent into an interdepartmental process for gathering remarks. The proposed ordinance spoke about the issuing of eIDs from the beginning of 2012. Finally, new eIDs started to be issued since that time, which was broadly criticised by municipalities which have been impacted by their issuing. Till that time the IDs had also been issued by municipalities with registry offices, and citizens were allowed to apply for IDs also in smaller municipalities. Since the beginning of 2012 this is not possible anymore, and new eIDs are issued only by municipalities with enlarged responsibilities. Representatives of municipal authorities have commented on this for example as follows: "Taking into account that legislative amendments that would postpone the issuing of electronic personal IDs (e-OP) is not possible due to the restrictions of the legislative process, since January 2012 e-OP will be issued by municipalities with enhanced responsibilities. The Ministry of Interior assigned only limited funding for their issuing … and this agenda has to be exercised with technical equipment which is currently used in the agenda of electronic passports … This suggested way is absolutely unrealistic, because guaranteeing the functionality of these agendas is not only a matter of technical equipment … The workplace which handles the travel documents has only two photo rooms, which shall satisfy the needs of 46,000 inhabitants, including those from 77 municipalities from the administrative district of our municipality. Currently the capacity of photo rooms is fully used, and the number of applications for passports is even growing. The number of applications will also grow, because it will not be possible to submit the applications in municipalities with the registry office. The fact that the issuing had not been postponed in order for the authorities to be adequately prepared for issuing new e-OP may even lead to the collapse of our municipal authority".

2.3. Impacts and effects

Czech central government, as well as its central executive authorities, has not been passive if we speak about the rhetoric of public-administration reform and e-government potential. Taking into account the requirements described in the accountability literature and introduced practices of e-government development, the concept of public-administration accountability and requirements on coordinated development has not been translated into more visible practices of the Czech government as well as the central level of public administration. Outlined information

indicates a rather legalistic approach to e-government management and coordination. The practice did not result in more visible capacity to act for political and/or administrative leaders.

Although the Smart administration strategy of 2007 called for the implementation of continual monitoring of public-service quality, the effects on the national level of e-government management are hardly visible in practice and in officially published information. Taking into account that official evaluation is limited in methodology, openness and transparency, we may only state the hypothesis that a higher degree of trust on the part of participating institutions (front-line providers of Czech POINT services) as well as citizens can be seen particularly in the case of the Czech POINT project. Still, the public is not fully aware of its functionalities (30% of individuals do not know the project at all according to CSO 2012), and introduced information indicates that the current potential project has not been fully realised, not speaking about the planned potential. Also the project of the Ministry of Interior to include the private corporations (like banks) in the network of Czech POINT has not brought the effects yet. There is no information that any bank has been decided to be involved so far. The Ministry published conditions of necessary authorisation of private subjects only very recently.

Fundamental challenges remain in the area of improvement of management and evaluation of e-government. The published evaluations of the Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for e-government coordination and outputs produced by other central authorities and actors responsible for e-government coordination, are still very limited in their scope. The officially published information does not cope with the currently most visible projects, and if they tackle them, then only in a supply-centred way. Outputs of evaluation which have been published by the Czech central level do not cope sufficiently with internal as well as external quality aspects. The integration of CSO's results may be beneficial, but its methodology must be improved to absorb the requirements emphasised in the international literature since it does not cope with demand and focuses more on the technical e-readiness aspects. The trust of the public may be undermined, because no official objective studies on the level of organisational change, cost-efficiency/effectiveness have been published by the central level, nor have the satisfaction of users and attitudes of citizens been systematically surveyed.

2.4. Lessons learned and policy recommendations

As indicated above, changes in legislation must be accompanied by following changes in practices, which cannot be based on a rather strict top-down approach.

In the case of Czech e-government development, mostly the rhetoric can be heard, and requirements enumerated in policy programmes and

	(sometimes following) legislation were not always translated into more systematic coordination practices. Practices in other areas (like social services, institutional structure and mechanisms for funding of regional development from the EU funds) indicate that such characteristics can be seen across the Czech administrative system.
	The above text pointed out particularly the following mutually interlinked issues of top-down e-government coordination in the Czech Republic which have to be addressed in order to bring/improve results and which raise questions about capacities of the central level to manage this public policy:
	- insufficient preparation and ex-ante evaluation of projects;
	- insufficient vertical communication of anticipated changes;
	- insufficient involvement of key stakeholders into policy design;
	- insufficient utilisation of the division of evaluation tasks for more integrated evaluation and evidence-based and coordinated development of e-government;
	- unstable political and executive leadership.
2.5. **Further information**	
Data and references	This study was elaborated within the project of the Czech Science Foundation no. P403/12/0366 "Identification and evaluation of region specific factors determining outcomes of reforms based on NPM – the case of CEE".
	The information presented is based mainly on documents and studies which are available only in Czech.
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